

Chemistry teachers asked to omit fireworks formula

By a Staff Reporter

The number of injuries caused by fireworks during last year's Guy Fawkes season was the lowest since records were first kept in 1962, states the annual report of the inspectors of explosives, published yesterday. The figures for serious injuries show a marked drop for the second year running.

There were 178 serious injuries in 1970, compared with 240 in 1969, a drop of nearly 26 per cent. Total injuries dropped by nearly 30 per cent, from 1,636 to 1,164.

The inspectors attribute this to the continued efforts by manufacturers to improve the reliability and safety of their products. But the inspectors are concerned at the number of attempts by school-children to make fireworks and other explosives, which caused 16 injuries last year.

They believe that many cases of

illegal manufacture of explosives are never reported, but often the offenders have learnt the mixtures during chemistry lessons without being warned of the possible consequences. Chemistry teachers are asked not to refer to these mixtures.

One case cited in the report is of a boy aged 15 who was injured in the thigh when a homemade bomb exploded in his pocket. An acid container, with which the boy intended to set the bomb off, broke while he was running through a busy street.

During 1970 there were three fatal accidents involving motor cycles with glass-fibre or resin tanks which ruptured, in each case causing the driver to be trapped in a pool of blazing petrol. The Home Office says that measures may be introduced soon to ensure that motor cycles are manufactured with metal fuel tanks.

The Report of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives. House of Commons Paper 507 (Stationery Office, 35p).

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